

May 9, 2011

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The national average price for a gallon of regular gas has risen to \$3.93. That price is up 19 cents from one month ago, and \$1.00 from this date a year ago. These high prices affect the American people both directly, through the higher cost of necessary transportation, and indirectly, through the increased cost of consumer goods and food.

At this critical juncture, it is important that the government take action to lower gas prices and end this threat. In your weekly address of April 22, 2011 you said that “there’s no silver bullet that can bring down gas prices right away.” It may be true that there is no one solution, but I do not believe that means the government does not have tools at its disposal to provide relief from high gas prices. I believe the government can approach this problem in a very direct way. We can take steps to increase domestic oil production and refining.

We can work to lower crude oil prices by encouraging increased domestic crude oil production. There is room to free up crude oil production both on and off shore. Due to canceled and delayed lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico and off the coast of Virginia, offshore leasing has fallen behind previous projections. Other Administration policies have also curtailed onshore production. In 2007, the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) projected total 2010 US oil production on federal lands to be 850 million barrels. Today, actual production on federal lands is at 714 million barrels. That is a 16% decline from what was projected. I would request that permitting agencies work to streamline, speed up, and improve the permitting process in order to close that production gap on federal lands.

The Administration’s current policy toward domestic energy production appears to be predicated on the assumption that we do not have the resources available to produce enough energy to affect prices for consumers. In your press conference from March 11, 2011 you stated that we only control 2% of the world’s oil. I believe that that assumption is misguided. The 2% figure is based off the estimation that the US has 19.1 billion barrels of proven, recoverable oil reserves. However, the Congressional Research Service maintains that we actually have 145.5 billion barrels of recoverable oil. That number does not take into account recoverable shale oil reserves,

which the US Department of Energy (DOE) estimates at a further 1.38 trillion barrels from federal lands.

In light of the economic harm incurred from today's high gasoline prices, and the vast untapped oil reserves currently available to us, I request that the Administration publicly release a detailed plan for lowering gas prices in the near term.

Sincerely,

Cory Gardner
Member of Congress